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SCIENCE

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FRIDAY, JANUARY 28, 1898.

LOGARITHMS ON THE 'SPOILS SYSTEM.'

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WHILE the President of the United States is considering whether he will follow the advice of the naturalists of the country and appoint as Fish Commissioner a really competent man, or accept the recommendation of one of his political friends and select a man who, in the opinion of that friend, knows nothing of the duties of the position, but will 'catch on' if he is given a little time, a good many other people are examining, with no small degree of astonishment, a recent example of the results of managing one of scientific bureaus of the government on the spoils system.

This bureau has just issued its Annual Report, a large quarto volume, and of its 720 pages 325—nearly one-half—are given to the publication of a ten-place table of logarithms! If there never had been a ten-place logarithmic table before this there might be a shadow of an excuse for its publication by the government, but when such tables have been available for more than a hundred years, and can be bought almost anywhere for a small sum, it is difficult to imagine a reason for the printing of this one. Just what it has cost the government from first to last cannot very well be esti-